Megan Trujillo  
Comm 2100  
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Dr. Bell  

Topic: Baby Sex Selection  
General Purpose: To Persuade  
Specific Purpose: To convince the audience that sex selection of babies is unethical  
Central Idea: Recent developments in science have made possible the ability to select the sex of babies, but should this scientific capability be used/allowed?  

INTRODUCTION  

Attention-getter: This is a blank stick figure (on poster) and I need your help choosing its basic characteristics. Let’s vote and the majority rule will decide what it will look like.  

1. Raise your hand if you prefer green eyes. Blue eyes? Brown eyes?  
2. Next, raise your hand if you prefer blonde hair. Brunette? Red hair?  
3. Now, raise your hand if you would prefer a boy? A girl?  

Credibility material: You have just participated in a simulation of the scientific capability to produce what are called “designer babies.” In 1990, scientists discovered a method that allows parents to select the gender of their baby. The science of gender selection was initially created to prevent parents with genetic disorders, such as the X-linked disease, from passing them onto their children (Schulman & Karabinus). Today, the science of
sex selection is being abused in the United States and has resulted in sex-selective infanticide, child abandonment, abortion and adoption (Savulescu & Dahl).

Relevance to audience: We all have the freedom to make decisions each and every day, but should we be allowed to decide the sex of our unborn babies?

Preview of speech: Today, through discussing the background information of gender selection and the cause of the problems it creates, I will show you why this practice is unethical and also brainstorm plausible solutions for its problems.

Let’s begin by reviewing the basic background information of gender selection so that you may understand the cause of it.

BODY

I. There are both ethical and demographic concerns that accompany gender selection.

A. The two main ethical concerns of gender selection include sexual discrimination and psychological implications.

1. The act of choosing a baby’s gender condones sexist values. A person’s worth should not be decided by their gender. In a society where discrimination is ever-present, we shouldn’t let science encourage gender stereotypes and the assumption that one sex is superior to the other.
2. Furthermore, gender selection produces psychological implications. There is a possibility that parents who choose the gender of their child will expect their child to act and think in gender-specific ways. Children who are products of gender selection should not have to deal with the pressure of these expectations. According to Dr. Leon Kass, chief of the President’s Council on Bioethics: “A child ceases to be regarded as a gift and more of a product of our desires” (Hall).

B. Gender imbalance is the main demographic concern of gender selection.

1. Statistics show that internationally males are preferred over females for these reasons: males have the ability to carry a family name, males are more economically viable and male babies are easier to take care of than female babies (Hesketh & Wei Xing).

2. The average sex ratio is normally around 105 males for every 100 females (Hesketh & Wei Xing). If the number of females decreases because males are preferred, we could see a drastic increase in prostitution, sexual violence and trafficking of women (Hesketh & Wei Xing). A balanced sex ratio is imperative for a society’s overall productivity, efficiency and economic progress because each gender plays a vital role in our culture.

Let’s continue by examining the major cause of these problems with gender selection so that we may brainstorm possible solutions.
II. Government involvement is at the roots of the problems with gender selection. In countries, such as ours, the lack of government involvement is to blame.

A. Currently, there are not any laws in the United States barring the practice of gender selection (Grady). Americans have access to clinics that conduct gender selection methods such as in-vitro fertilization (Dahl). Essentially, our government is encouraging gender discrimination by allowing Americans to play God and design their children to satisfy society’s gender stereotypes.

B. In many other countries, such as India and China, the government has taken action to combat sex-selective abortions by prohibiting prenatal determination of sex (Grady).

C. Australia, Canada and Britain have outlawed the practice of any scientific method of gender selection (Grady).

Now that you have a basic understanding of what gender selection is and the root of its problems, let’s brainstorm possible solutions.

III. There is only one solution to the increase in social and demographic implications caused by gender selection: laws and regulations.

A. The United States should follow suit of other countries that have stepped up to take action against the practice of gender selection by implementing laws.
1. First, our government should not allow prenatal determination of sex. By prohibiting expecting parents from learning whether their unborn child is a male or female, the number of sex-selective abortions should decrease.

2. Laws prohibiting sex-selective adoptions (placing a child up for adoption because of undesirable sex) should also be implemented.

B. The government should also disallow licensed clinics from performing scientific methods that allow parents to create “designer babies”. This will discourage parents from placing value on a child based on their unique characteristics.

   1. Parents should not be given the option to alter their child’s DNA to predetermine their sex.

   2. Furthermore, parents should also be prohibited from selecting any of their child’s characteristics such as eye color, hair color, etc.

Now, let’s review the main points and link these main points to the activity we participated in at the beginning of this speech.

CONCLUSION

Summary statement: Sex selection of babies via scientific methods performs discrimination in an ambiguous, yet powerful manner. By outlawing members of our society to select the sex of their unborn babies, we are reducing discrimination based on
gender and also decreasing the psychological, economic and demographic problems that result from sex selection.

Audience response statement: I would like you to take another look at this stick figure. We can determine that [list the chosen popular characteristics] are preferred in this class. Now, raise your hand if all of your characteristics match the characteristics in this illustration. If you did not raise your hand, your characteristics are considered "least desirable" to the members of this class.

WOW statement: I would like to leave you with this thought: “If given the opportunity a second time, would you chose the basic characteristics of this stick figure again and participate in this form of discrimination?”


